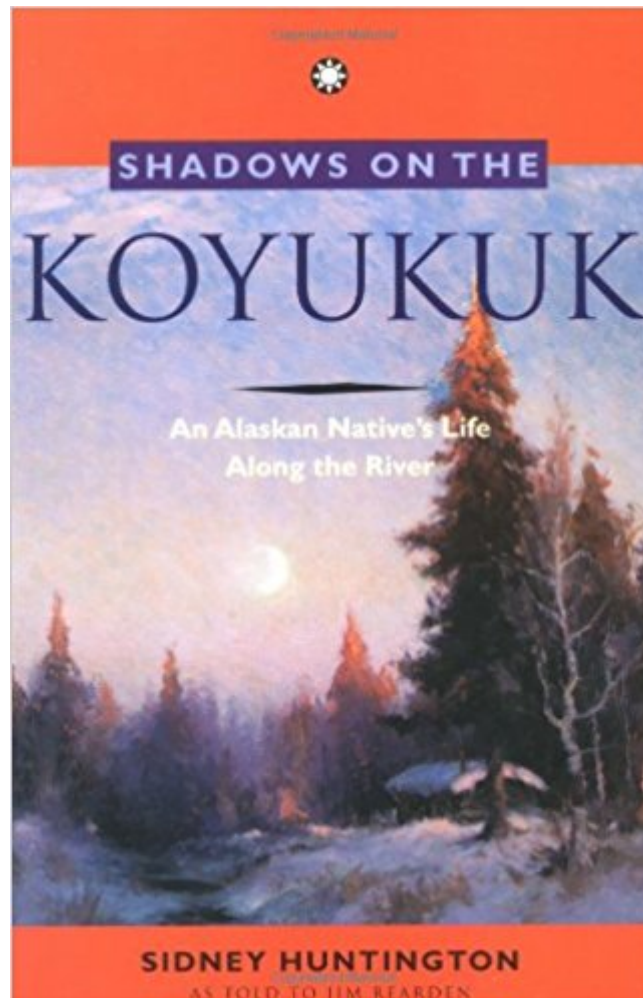




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Shadows On The Koyukuk: An Alaskan Native's Life Along The River



Synopsis

In his dramatic autobiography, Alaskan elder Sidney Huntington, half-white, half-Athabaskan, recounts his adventures, tragedies, and ultimate success.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Rearden was outdoor editor for Alaska magazine for 20 years.

This book will be added to my permanent collection to be handed down when I get too old too dream any more. Sidney's life story is almost too good to put down long enough to get a good nights sleep. The story of his parents early lives, his Mother a Native Athabaskan, his Father an American gold seeker from the lower 48, enrich the adventure. When his Mother dies, leaving Sidney to help his little 5 year old brother and toddler sister survive alone for weeks in the Alaskan wilderness till rescued, Sidney must become a man, at age SEVEN? Sidney's life as a young boy trapping, hunting, and fishing for survival kept me riveted. As Sidney matures and raises his own family the adventures continue. Anyone who has any interest in Alaska or wilderness survival would certainly enjoy this book. The history of the region and its people is most interesting and told by a person of mixed race with a foot in two worlds, lending a perspective not often available. I am fortunate to also own a copy of Sidney's little brother James Huntington's book, On the Edge of Nowhere, which is James's life story, written a few years earlier than Sidney's. If anything, it's probably even more entertaining, and a must read also.

It's my understanding that as of this review, our main character Mr Sidney Huntington is still with us and soon to be honored, along with the co author, at a University of Alaska graduation ceremony. He's 90 years old God bless him. I'd be proud to shake his hand after reading this wonderful book. The author wrote this book I think for many reasons. One big one is that he had a little Brother named James (Jimmy) who wrote a very good book many years before this one called "On the Edge of Nowhere". If you are going to read them both (which you should) start with Jimmy's book. This book is a little better in my opinion. But they are both terrific! Jimmy's book had a few inaccuracies that Sidney cleared up as they shared most of their youth. They were half Indian half white kids who both grew up to be quite accomplished. In Sidney's case he seems to have met with some financial success through his hard work and entrepreneurial spirit as well. Jimmy won some big sled dog races and was successful in many ways too. They both served in elected or appointed positions and helped to make Alaska a better state. There were just so many great stories. My favorite story was about his Uncle and Aunt who brought Sidney Beaver hunting in Winter the Indian way. They blocked up escape routes and chopped through the top of the Den. Then his Aunt went into the Den and passed the live Beavers out to her Husband who dispatched them with a club. There is more to it than that of course. You must hand out the Beavers in a certain order and must talk to them a certain way. You'll have to read this to get the details. I hope this intrigues you because I thought it was pretty cool. How about the old Indian way of Hunting Grizz? First of all you go secretly. No one must know. And you can't call the animal a bear because that is disrespectful. If anyone, especially a wife finds out your plans, you must cancel. When you do finally sneak away with your few companions you might be gone for a few months and frankly you may never come back. You have to stand near a den entrance with the butt end of your spear planted in the ground, showing no fear while a huge Grizzley comes rushing at you cause you disturbed his slumber. You hope he comes the right way and must be pure of soul so God will grant you this prize. If he does, you may never talk about the hunt because that is disrespectful. Amazing! Really interesting history, rituals and sociology are included in these tales that are related in a very relaxed and readable way. If you ever wondered how those Trappers survived living in the middle of nowhere, or you ever wanted to do it yourself, you'll probably like this book. I wish there was a sequel. It was just a great story.

I liked *On the Edge of Nowhere* (by Jimmy Huntington, his brother) a lot better. If you are more interested in the Indian customs and backgrounds you might like this one, but for sheer reading pleasure go with *On the Edge of Nowhere*!

Excellent read. Owned it once years ago and wanted to read it again.

Wonderful book! I enjoyed it immensely.

What a story, what a life! Stanley's tiny mother makes an incredible journey to reach her children left alone with relatives. Across frozen rivers and through "No Man's Land," occupied by hostile Eskimos, this Athapaskan native traveled. At last, weak and exhausted, she was rescued by the one friendly Eskimo trader, Schilikuk who traded with her father. No Athapaskan Indian nor Eskimo dared enter "No Man's Land," because it was suicide to do so. Stanley's own incredible survival with his siblings, after the sudden death of his mother in an isolated cabin when his father was gone, seems just as amazing as his mother's long trek. Made of the same strong spirit and constitution as his parents his long life takes many twists and turns. You will not want to miss this native Alaskan's own story, nor the education you will receive about the Alaskan frontier.

Powerful biography/really an auto biography but written as told to. This is not a sweet soft story of today--but life without the modern conveniences, life on life's terms in the early 1900s.

This is a powerful book about a man many here in Alaska know well. Some of it is difficult to imagine but it's all true. I encourage you to read it with one warning - don't read chapter three just before bed. It is a powerful and, some may say disturbing, chapter of tragedy on a level that requires some reflection. Very good book.

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